

## Joint Statement on Republic of Georgia-United States Relations *July 18, 1997*

During their July 18, 1997 meeting in Washington, Presidents Clinton and Shevardnadze underscored the special importance they attach to the close and productive relationship between the United States and Georgia. They committed to work together actively to expand cooperation throughout the foreign policy, security, economic and commercial spheres. The Presidents noted that the growing U.S.-Georgia partnership is firmly based on common goals and values and reflects the national interests of both states.

President Clinton praised President Shevardnadze's staunch leadership in vigorously implementing democratic and free-market principles, which has made Georgia a model of political and economic reform among the new independent states. President Clinton underscored the full support of the United States for the efforts of the Georgian government and parliament in pursuing reform in recent years. Georgia's continued commitment to democratization and respect for human rights will only further strengthen the warm ties between the two states and peoples.

The two Presidents noted positively the contribution to Georgia's reform efforts made by U.S. technical and humanitarian assistance. President Clinton pledged continued robust support for Georgia's reforms.

The Presidents called for expanded cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral, to promote Georgia's further integration into emerging European security structures. They expressed satisfaction with the entry into force on May 15, 1997 of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Flank Document. President Clinton encouraged Georgia's active involvement in NATO's new Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

(EAPC). He also expressed strong commitment to assisting Georgia's efforts to address non-proliferation and export control concerns and to develop a modern military under civilian control and a viable border guard.

President Clinton reaffirmed U.S. support for Georgia's territorial integrity and a peaceful settlement to the tragic conflict in Abkhazia. The United States and Georgia support the early resumption of negotiations on Abkhazia, under the aegis of the UN, with Russia as facilitator and the participation of the OSCE and the other Friends of Georgia countries—France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The two Presidents agreed on the need to expand commercial relations between the United States and Georgia, including higher levels of trade and investment. In support of these goals, the instruments of ratification for the U.S.-Georgia Bilateral Investment Treaty were exchanged during the visit. The two sides agree to continue close cooperation in support of Georgia's rapid accession to the World Trade Organization on commercial terms generally applied to newly acceding members, which will further Georgia's integration into the global economy.

President Clinton praised Georgia's efforts to strengthen regional cooperation in the Caucasus, including its strong support for the Eurasian transport corridor. The Presidents agreed that this project is vitally important to the economic future not only of Georgia, but the region as a whole.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## The President's Radio Address *July 19, 1997*

Good morning. Today I want to talk about the important progress we're making in our efforts to get guns out of the hands of violent juveniles.

Our administration has put in place a tough, smart anticrime strategy, relying on more community police, stricter punishment, and better afterschool prevention efforts. This strategy is